

REMARKS

The Official Action mailed March 29, 2004, has been received and its contents carefully noted. Filed concurrently herewith is a *Request for Two Month Extension of Time*, which extends the shortened statutory period for response to August 29, 2004. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that this response is being timely filed.

The Applicants note with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on June 25, 1999, June 15, 2001, December 18, 2001, and May 12, 2003.

Claims 1-3, 6-9, 12-14 and 19-21 were pending in the present application prior to the above amendment. The Applicants note with appreciation the indication of the allowability of independent claim 6 and dependent claims 8, 12-14, 20 and 21 (pages 6-7, Paper No. 20040315). Claims 1-3, 9 and 19 have been canceled, claims 12 and 14 have been amended into independent form and include allowable subject matter, claim 21 has been amended to depend from claim 14, and new claim 22 has been added to recite additional protection to which the Applicants are entitled. Accordingly, claims 6-8, 12-14 and 20-22 are now pending in the present application, of which claims 6, 12 and 14 are independent. For the reasons set forth in detail below, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Paragraphs 2 of the Official Action rejects claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph and paragraphs 3-9 reject claims 1-3 and 9 under 37 U.S.C. § 103. In response, claims 1-3, 9 and 19 have been canceled; therefore, the rejections are moot.

Paragraph 11 objects to claims 12, 14, 20 and 21 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In response, claims 12 and 14 have been rewritten into independent form and include the features of allowable claims 1 and 9, respectively. Claim 21 has been amended to depend from claim 14, and new claim 22 has been added to recite additional protection and depends from claim 12. Therefore, claims 6-8, 12-14 and 20-22 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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